above all the people which the Lord God hath brought out of the land of Jerusalem; and this I do because they have been a diligent people in keeping the commandments of the Lord.” The people gathered together, and King Benjamin taught them. They all ended up going through a spiritual rebirth together. This kind of rebirth experienced together as a group of people knit their hearts together and they became unified as a whole.

To become unified as a people we need to follow the second greatest commandment to love others as we love ourselves. In every case where people have gathered together in the Book of Mormon they have made this commandment a vital part of their gathering. We see this very principle in Mosiah 18:27-28. They did, “...impair of their substance, every one according to that which he had...they should impair of their substance of their own free will and good desires towards God...” In a talk given by D. Todd Christofferson he said that, “...each of us should prayerfully consider whether we are doing what we should and all that we should in the Lord's eyes with respect to the poor and the needy.” This brings to mind Matthew 25:40, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” Gathering together, and giving to one another brings us together in a Christ-like way.

We are to be a Zion-like people. 4 Nephi 1:1-18 is a perfect example of this. There was no sin and no contention among this people, and it states in verse 16 that, “...there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God.” This happiness comes from being a Christ-like people, and doing the things that He would do. We need to make this happen. Many wonder when the Millennium will start, but part of that is up to us. The millennium can start in our homes and our lives as we choose to live righteously. This is so important because in the millennium we will be gathered together as Christ's people, so we need to gather as a righteous people now.

“He caused that fortifications should be built round about them”

There are so many influences out there that are trying to break us away from what is good and righteous. Just as Lehi saw the great and spacious building in his dream that was convincing people to leave the iron rod and the tree of life. Not only did these people given into fear and doubt, they did not fortify and guard themselves. The adversary desires to have us. If we do not guard ourselves day and night, just Lachoneus had guards day and night to protect the people, we will be opening ourselves up to temptation and sin that could lead to our destruction. Fortifying ourselves is vital to our salvation.

One example from the Book of Mormon that illustrates the importance of guarding ourselves is found in Moroni 43-44. The Nephites are at war once again with the Lamanites, but the Nephites have one important advantage over the Lamanites, and that is their armor. The armor that the Nephites wore protected the most vital parts of their bodies. Moroni had, “...prepared his people with breastplates and with arm-sheilds, yea and also shields to defend their heads, and also they were dressed with thick clothing--” (Alma 43:19) Symbolically, the armor of God does the same. The armor that the Nephites wore protected them from the blows of the Lamanites. The armor of God can be a great protection against the fiery darts that the adversary continually sends our way. It can guard against temptation and sin, and can save us from a painful spiritual death; just as the armor that the Nephites wore saved them from a painful temporal death.

The principle of guarding and fortifying is especially important in the home. Parents are the watchmen that watch over the family, and teach them how to protect themselves as individuals. We need to do everything that we can to protect and fortify the family from the evils that constantly seek to destroy. For, it is in the home that the armor of God is tailored to fit each individual so that they can be adequately protected from the forces of evil that desire to cause our painful spiritual death. We must always be on our guard.

5 D. Todd Christofferson, “Come to Zion.” Ensign, Nov. 2008